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Letter dated 18 August 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), in accordance with paragraph (a) of the annex to resolution 2160 (2014).

I should be grateful if the report could be brought to the attention of the Council members and issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gerard **van Bohemen**
Chair
Security Council Committee established pursuant to
resolution 1988 (2011)

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Letter dated 1 June 2015 from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011)

I enclose the Monitoring Team's sixth report pursuant to the annex of resolution 2160 (2014).

I want to particularly commend the experts who have done the bulk of the work in Afghanistan on this report and earlier ones, along with the superb contribution by a United Nations staff member who supports our work on Afghanistan. Their extensive work in and around Afghanistan under conditions of significant risk continues to form the anchor on which Monitoring Team reporting, analysis and recommendations are based.

The Monitoring Team notes that the original language of the report is English. For ease of reference, the three recommendations made by the Team are in bold.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Evans**
Coordinator
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team
established pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004)

Sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2160 (2014) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan

Summary

The present report provides an update of the situation in Afghanistan since the publication of the last report of the Monitoring Team in October 2014 (S/2014/888). The Taliban spring offensive is in full swing, with a greater level of coordination in evidence, including the participation of foreign terrorist fighters. Despite their increasing efforts, the Taliban presently remain unable to alter the military stalemate that persists on the ground.

The new Government, led by President Ghani, has filled all Cabinet positions in the security field. Afghan troops continue to execute significant military operations on their own, temporarily retaking one of the four district headquarters (Nawa in Ghazni province) that was under the control of the Taliban for a number of years.[a] However, the Taliban have also managed to temporarily overrun some district centres and hold them for up to three days. To advance peace, security and a political process in Afghanistan two essential factors remain important. The first is continued external financial support, in particular to Afghan national security and defence forces. The second is generating a high degree of confidence in Government institutions from the Afghan public.

On the political front, the Taliban leadership is increasingly divided over the question of engaging with the Government of Afghanistan. The top leadership vacillated on this during the first three months of 2015, before deciding on prioritizing a military approach, accompanied by permission for some elements to engage in contacts with non-Taliban Afghans, but not with the Government. Hardliners who earlier had formed splinter groups tend now instead to declare their loyalty to the "Khorasan province" of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (QDe.115) (listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq).

[a] The Monitoring Team had reported in its fourth report that only four district centres were outside the control of Government forces; among them was Nawa district in Ghazni province (see S/2014/402, para. 3).

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I. Evidence base

1. The Team visited Afghanistan in the run-up to the writing of the present report four times, in November 2014 and January, March and May 2015. Senior Afghan Government officials addressed the Committee on 26 February 2015 at a special session. The Team continues to receive regular official updates on the security situation. The Team also received information from Member States on the situation in Afghanistan, and visited three neighbouring States: Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the Team met with Afghan officials outside Afghanistan, in addition to its regular interactions with the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York.

II. Political context

Afghan Taliban spring offensive

2. Over the winter of 2014-2015 Afghan Security Forces conducted a series of operations that targeted Taliban forces. According to Afghan Government officials, the increased presence of foreign fighters was noticeable during these operations. In several locations Afghan forces captured foreign fighters, as well as family members accompanying them. Most of the captured individuals reported that they had previously been located in North Waziristan, Pakistan, and had left because of the Pakistani military operation "Zarb-e-Azab". Most prominent among these were fighters belonging to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (QDe.010) and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (QDe.132). Among both groups significant numbers have started to declare their loyalty to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (QDe.115)[1] and use black flags previously associated only with Al-Qaida (QDe.004). The Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (QDe.118) was also reported to have increased its activity in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan.

3. As a result, the insurgency has become more diverse, and includes a sizeable number of fighters from Central Asia, the Caucasus region and Pakistan. The Taliban launched attacks in multiple provinces covered by the same army corps in an effort to overextend and exhaust them.

4. The new Taliban spring offensive "Azm" ("Resolve") was announced on 24 April 2015, accompanied by almost simultaneous attacks by Taliban in 22 provinces on the same day. Major Taliban assaults took place outside their core areas in the provinces of Farah, Kunduz and Badakhshan. According to Afghan security officials, the current offensive is characterized by a significantly higher quality of strategic planning and better tactical execution by Taliban groups, with foreign fighters acting as force multipliers. In various provinces, such as Kunduz and Badakhshan, the Taliban carefully analysed local circumstances and adjusted their tactics to take full advantage of security gaps and local rivalries. This resulted in initial tactical successes, although it remains to be seen whether the Taliban will be able to sustain their gains over the summer months.

5. Under current circumstances, two alternative scenarios from the current fighting season seem possible. In a negative scenario, it is not impossible that the

[1] Listed as Al-Qaida in Iraq.

Taliban could gain control of additional districts in the north of Afghanistan, in particular in Badakhshan province.[2] Another cause for concern is the continuing and sustained fighting in several districts in Nangarhar province.[2] While these gains would not constitute a strategic reversal of the existing military stalemate in Afghanistan, sustained control of additional districts[3] would constitute a propaganda success for the insurgency and therefore a partial setback to the slow attrition of the insurgency that was observed during 2013 and 2014. In addition, it remains unclear what impact such a propaganda success could have on the willingness of the Taliban leadership to eventually engage in meaningful negotiations with the Government of Afghanistan. Since the current top leadership seem to be hesitant to engage in direct negotiations with the Government (see sect. IV), it seems likely that in this scenario the start of direct negotiations would again be postponed.

6. In a more positive scenario, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces would be able to recapture and hold currently contested districts in the north and east of the country. According to data provided to the Monitoring Team by interlocutors in the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in early 2015, the Taliban were willing to suffer significant losses in the fight for control of these districts. That would represent a clear setback for the Taliban leadership. The Taliban would emerge from the current fighting season having suffered a propaganda defeat. Such a scenario might strengthen the minority within the Taliban leadership who currently argue for starting a process of meaningful negotiations if they could point to the lack of success of the military efforts of the insurgency (see sect. IV).

7. In both scenarios, according to the assessment of senior interlocutors of the Monitoring Team within the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, sustained international support remains a crucial factor for success. Continued external financial support for the Forces will be especially critical. The Monitoring Team will continue to monitor the progress of the current fighting season and will regularly update the Committee.

III. Reconciliation

8. The new Afghan Government has made the peace process its priority. President Ashraf Ghani has prioritized engagement with Pakistan and key Gulf States in pursuit of this aim. However, the Taliban as a movement continues to be divided over the very desirability of reconciliation.

9. Some Taliban attached to the Quetta Shura[4] continue to advocate for political engagement. According to Afghan interlocutors, these individuals build their case around a number of arguments. Some point to the disastrous military situation in Kandahar and Helmand provinces and the way rival tribes and networks have been empowered as a result of the ongoing military confrontation. Others point to the

[2] Monitoring Team discussions with senior Afghan security officials in May 2015.

[3] During the last two years, the Taliban were only able to sustainably control four districts, two in the south of Afghanistan and two in the east of Afghanistan.

[4] The Quetta Shura and the Peshawar Shura represent analytical concepts, not geographic concepts. The terms refer to networks of Taliban leaders who spent time in Quetta or Peshawar as refugees. Members of the Quetta Shura consider themselves closer to the Taliban Leadership Council than members of the Haqqani Network or the Peshawar Shura.

challenge for the Taliban of breaking out from their core areas of strength in the south, with some even questioning whether military success in the south alone could bring victory. These advocates of political engagement are open to a negotiated settlement through a regional process that includes Pakistan.

10. Meanwhile, another small group of Taliban leaders propose direct talks between the movement and the Afghan Government. This strand is led by Tayyib Agha and includes individuals associated with the group currently residing in Doha.

11. According to Afghan Government officials, some of the main Taliban leaders, in particular Mullah Mohammad Abbas Akhund (TAi.066), initially reacted favourably to overtures made by the new Afghan Government through Pakistan. In January 2015 representatives of the Quetta Shura, including Mullah Gul Agha Ishakzai (TAi.147), currently heading the Taliban finance commission, also announced that they were seeking a negotiated end to the conflict.[5]

12. However, senior Afghan Government interlocutors explained that the top Taliban leadership later clarified in March 2015 that no talks would be entertained with the Afghan Government. This position was set out by Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour Shah Mohammad (TAi.011) and supported by Mullah Abdul Qayum Zaker (not listed),[6] Mullah Abdul Razaq Akhund Lala Akhund (TAi.053), Mullah Abdul Manan Nyazi (TAi.097) and the leader of the Peshawar Shura[7] Mawlawi Abdul Kabir Mohammad Jan (TAi.003).

13. However, the Team was also informed that Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour had determined that the Taliban political commission, now headquartered in Doha, for the time being is free to pursue meetings with Afghans "in their personal capacity". According to information provided to the Monitoring Team and media reports, at least one meeting of this nature was held in May 2015.[8] That meeting included senior figures of the High Peace Council and was followed by an official Taliban statement.[9] The position expressed by the political commission in those contacts was that the presence of foreigners was tantamount to the

[5] According to the assessment of the Monitoring Team, one potential explanation why Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour Shah Mohammad (TAi.011), despite his critical stance towards negotiations (see below), has not taken any concrete action to stop the group around Mullah Gul Agha Ishakzai (TAi.147) could be that Gul Agha Ishakzai, the top financial manager of the movement, is involved in this project. Gul Agha Ishakzai's newly found willingness to negotiate in turn might also be motivated by his responsibility for the finances of the movement. The current situation seems to mirror 2010, when Abdul Wasay Mu'tasim Agha (delisted on 19 July 2012), at that time the top financial manager of the Taliban movement, also began to advocate negotiations.

[6] Qayum Zaker reconciled in January 2015 with Akhtar Mansur after developing differences over his performance as military leader. Mansur had edged Zaker out over his failure to significantly disrupt the first round of the Afghan presidential elections in April 2014.

[7] The Peshawar Shura is not a geographical term, but an analytical concept describing a group of Taliban leaders.

[8] See for example: Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, "Report of a 2-day Pugwash meeting on Security in Afghanistan", Qatar, 2 to 3 May 2015.

[9] See for example: "Full text of the Statement delivered by the Delegation of Political Office of the Islamic Emirate in the International Pugwash Research Conference" published on the Taliban website on 7 May 2015.

continuation of war in Afghanistan. Taliban representatives continue to present new preconditions before entering into any kind of negotiations with the Government.[10]

IV. Status of the Taliban

14. The internal structure of the Taliban movement appears to have evolved still further since the last report. Instead of a separate "mining office", reference is now being made to the "Organ for collecting and organizing special revenue". This may well reflect the growing role of local fundraising from mining operations and extortion.

15. The Taliban military commission appears to have been restructured into nine regional subcommands. Five Taliban quick reaction forces are being currently developed, with each unit having the goal of being between 200 and 500 men strong and in charge of three provinces. One such unit is reportedly in charge of Herat, Farah and Nimroz provinces, and another for Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces. These forces are directly under the command of senior Taliban commanders who also act as shadow governors of key provinces, such as Qayum Zaker, Sirajuddin Jallaloudine Haqqani (TAi.144) and Qari Baryal (not listed).

16. Splinter groups, such as Fidayi Mahaz,[11] continue to be active. Some Afghan security force reports allege that Fidayi Mahaz has also declared loyalty to ISIL, but recent pronouncements on its website indicate that it continues to market activities under their original name.[12] In addition to threatening the Taliban political commission in Qatar, a separate threat was made against Habib ur-Rahman Hekmatyar, son of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (QDi.088), for colluding with the Government in January 2015.[13]

17. The Haqqani Network (TDe.012) continues to be active as part of the insurgency, despite sustained military efforts by Pakistan targeting some centres of Haqqani Network activity, most notably through its military campaign in North Waziristan, Pakistan. The arrest of Anas Haqqani (not listed) and Hafiz Rashid (not listed) at the end of 2014 was a significant success of the Afghan security and intelligence apparatus and a blow to the network. Nevertheless, the current string of attacks in Kabul seems to demonstrate that the Haqqani Network had been weakened only temporarily. In addition, the Haqqani Network and splinter groups, such as Fidayi Mahaz, are currently extremely unlikely to participate in or commit to a reconciliation process with the Government of Afghanistan.

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[10] The Taliban website, on 7 May 2015, under the title "Islamic Emirate believes in intra-Afghan dialogue", listed several preconditions for talks with the Government. The article demanded the abolishment of the presence of foreign troops as the "occupation", the 1988 sanctions regime as the "black list", international arrest warrants as the "reward list" and the ongoing detention of Taliban as "political prisoners". The article also demanded the creation of an office in Qatar as "an official address for the Islamic Emirate".

[11] Fidayi Mahaz was also previously called Da Fidayano Mahaz and Dadullah Front.

[12] The website of Fidayi Mahaz claimed attacks against Afghan security forces in the provinces of Jawzjan, Sari Pul and Kunduz in April and May 2015.

[13] Anonymous article on the website of Fidayi Mahaz, "Someone for friendship and someone for enmity", posted on 28 February 2015, showing Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's son with Afghan police officers.

V. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

18. The number of groups and individuals who are openly declaring either loyalty to or sympathy with ISIL continues to grow in a number of provinces in Afghanistan. Afghan security force estimates shared with the Monitoring Team suggest that around 10 per cent of the active Taliban-dominated insurgency are ISIL sympathizers. However, this percentage is not static, as allegiances and statements vary during the ongoing fighting season. However, the viral spread of ISIL branding is in evidence, with sightings of groups with some form of ISIL branding or sympathy reported in 25 provinces in Afghanistan, according to Afghan Government sources. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces has reported that it has encountered or observed ISIL-affiliated groups in the provinces of Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Farah, Faryab, Ghazni, Ghor, Helmand, Herat, Jawzjan, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, Kunar, Kunduz, Logar, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktya, Paktika, Sari Pol, Takhar, Uruzgan, Wardak and Zabul.

19. According to a number of Afghan security officials, groups that have declared loyalty to ISIL in Afghanistan can be divided into three categories: the largest number of individuals has been recruited from within already existing insurgent groups, some of which are disgruntled with the central leadership of the Taliban. One example is the case of Abdul Rauf Khadem (TAi.025), who earlier had changed his religious affiliation and had repeatedly clashed with the Taliban leadership. In his turbulent career he repeatedly held the office of shadow governor of Uruzgan province. He was also the chief of the Taliban intelligence commission and special adviser to Mullah Mohammed Omar. In October 2014, he reportedly visited Iraq and upon his return collected followers among the Taliban in Helmand and Farah provinces by paying out large sums of money. Another individual, Abdul Rahim Muslimdost (not listed), had been a fringe member of the Taliban movement before declaring himself loyal to ISIL. These individuals use the new "brand" of ISIL as a convenient label under which they can organize and create a distinct new identity in contrast to the "traditional" Taliban leadership. The second largest group of individuals that operates under the ISIL banner in Afghanistan is made up of fighters who have fled into Afghanistan owing to the ongoing Pakistani military operations in the border region. These individuals formerly belonged to groups such as Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (QDe.132) and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (QDe.010) and rebranded themselves in recent months. Many of these individuals have close connections to, or sympathize with, the Al-Qaida movement. Finally, a very small number of non-Afghan individuals[14] have come to Afghanistan directly from Iraq or the Syrian Arab Republic and are considered by Afghan officials to constitute the nucleus of ISIL activities in the country.

20. While the various groups loyal to ISIL regularly engage Afghan Government forces, reports of fighting between groups loyal to ISIL and other parts of the insurgency are rare. According to Afghan security officials, in Nangarhar province groups loyal to ISIL and the Taliban are currently clashing in a struggle for resources generated by provincial drug production and trafficking. On the other hand, in Logar province, individuals loyal to ISIL seem primarily to be engaged in creating a local network of contacts and refrain from fighting with other parts of the

[14] According to various Afghan officials, the maximum number is around 70.

insurgency that operate in the province. This tactic seems to mirror the initial period of ISIL development in the Syrian Arab Republic.

21. According to the assessment of the Government of Afghanistan, the current primary goal of ISIL in Afghanistan is to recruit sympathizers and followers and establish a network of contacts. Therefore, while Afghan security forces do not categorize the emergence of groups loyal to ISIL as an immediate increased threat, they continue to monitor the situation closely, as these developments constitute a potential new threat to both Afghanistan and the wider region.

22. It is noteworthy that the connection between groups that declare their loyalty to ISIL in Afghanistan and ISIL central propaganda outlets in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic seems to be unclear. While the internal propaganda in Afghanistan and Pakistan of groups that consider themselves loyal to ISIL frequently report on attacks against Government forces, the central outlet of ISIL, Al-Bayan Media, rarely takes these attacks up in its regular status reports concerning the activities of ISIL and its affiliates outside Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

23. Nevertheless, the Monitoring Team observed a marked increase in the quality of propaganda activities of the Taliban movement on its official website since the end of 2014. In particular, the propaganda material of the movement in English has significantly improved in style and content, appearing to be geared more towards an international audience and media outlets. This increased quality coincides with the beginning of propaganda efforts related to ISIL in Afghanistan. Therefore, according to interlocutors of the Monitoring Team in the Government of Afghanistan, this development is the first sign of a competition between the Taliban and movements related to ISIL. Unfortunately, this also means that the national and international public relations and outreach efforts of the Government of Afghanistan are now competing with increasingly capable adversaries.

VI. Al-Qaida and associates

24. Afghan interlocutors pointed to the continuing presence of Al-Qaida-associated radical groups in the border regions of the country that were pushed out of Pakistan's tribal areas by the ongoing Pakistani military operations. Afghan interlocutors explained that these groups, although not yet forming an organized block, have contributed to further insecurity in the border areas, as they are not only fighting Afghan security forces, but also target other sections of the Afghan insurgency.

25. High-ranking Afghan security officials assessed that there has been no overall strategic change to the position of Al-Qaida-affiliated groups in Afghanistan. Al-Qaida-affiliated groups remain a threat to peace and security in the country. They act as trainers and facilitators, especially for improvised explosive devices. Numerically they continue to form the minority of the active fighting forces of the overall insurgency. Among new aspects of the threat of Al-Qaida inside Afghanistan is the growing visibility of groups that have declared loyalty to ISIL and additional fighters who flow across the border with Pakistan to escape the ongoing Pakistani military operations.

26. Since the beginning of 2015, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (QDe.010) has gained visibility across Afghanistan (see S/2014/888, para. 40). On

24 February 2015, IMU fighters, together with Taliban elements, abducted 31 travellers from the road in Zabul. These were later exchanged for foreign fighters that Afghan forces had arrested earlier in Faryab and Badakhshan provinces. This exchange was facilitated through negotiations conducted by local Taliban from Zabul. Afghan interlocutors suggest that the increased presence of IMU fighters in the country is due to Pakistani military operations in North Waziristan (which the Team visited in January 2015, noting the significant progress made by the Pakistan army at considerable cost to Pakistan). In addition, parts of IMU seem to have rebranded themselves. For example, at the end of March 2015, a statement attributed to Uthman Ghazi (not listed), the leader of IMU, challenged the leadership of Mullah Omar (TAi.004)[15] over the insurgency in Afghanistan and seemed to switch the overall loyalty of IMU to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (QDi.299)[16] and ISIL.[17] In a video published by the IMU media wing, Tohir Abdulkhalilovich Yuldashev (deceased, formerly listed) is portrayed as having called for the establishment of the caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi throughout his career following the irreversible fall of the Islamic Emirate headed by Mullah Omar.[18]

VII. 1988 sanctions: outcomes

27. Since the fifth report of the Monitoring Team, the following outcomes have been delivered.

28. The Security Council 1988 Committee has agreed to the recommendations of the Monitoring Team in its first and fourth reports (see S/2012/689, para. 33 and S/2014/402, para. 36) and, as a result, unofficial translations of the list entries and narrative summaries of all listed individuals in Dari[19] and Pashto[20] are now available on the website of the 1988 sanctions Committee. This has been strongly welcomed by Afghan interlocutors at both senior and working levels. The unofficial translations have also been a valuable tool for the Monitoring Team in its interactions with the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in the field, enabling the Team to gather more detailed information on listed individuals.

29. The Monitoring Team has also held two training workshops, in which several dozen official participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the High Peace Council, the National Security Council and investigators of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan have gained a deeper perspective on the sanctions regime and the various sanctions measures, as well as listing, delisting and exemption procedures. This capacity-building facilitation measure familiarized newly appointed officials with the 1988 sanctions regime and enabled the Team to strengthen its working level contacts with the Government of Afghanistan. This has been particularly timely, given that the change of Government has also seen new systems and personnel changes on sanctions.

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[15] Listed as Mohammed Omar Ghulam Nabi (TAi.004).

[16] Listed as Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai (QDi.299).

[17] See for example: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Uzbek Service "Uzbek Group In Afghanistan Pledge Allegiance To Islamic State", 31 March 2015.

[18] See for example "Jund Allah Studios presents a new video message from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: Ramaḍān Message and Message on the Caliphate", 3 May 2015.

[19] Available from: www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/pdf/1988Dari.pdf.

[20] Available from: www.un.org/sc/committees/1988/pdf/1988Pashto.

30. In May 2015, the Government of Afghanistan re-established a national focal point for all issues related to 1988 sanctions within the National Security Council. The national focal point can be reached at: nationalcontactpoint@nsc.gov.af.

VIII. Sanctions list and maintenance

31. The list saw few changes over the past seven months. Since 1 November 2014 two new listings have been approved by the Committee. No individuals or entities were delisted.

IX. Implementation of sanctions

1. Travel ban

32. The implementation of the travel ban against listed individuals remains a challenge. The Monitoring Team continues to monitor regular but unconfirmed national, regional and international media reports that allege travel of listed individuals. Most of these reports allege that the travel of these listed individuals is related to ongoing efforts to start a direct negotiation process between the Taliban movement and the Government of Afghanistan. The Monitoring Team has not received official confirmation of any of these potential violations by a Member State.

33. The travel ban continues to be a powerful 1988 sanctions measure that the Taliban care about. During a recent Pugwash conference, Taliban members criticized the travel ban and noted that they cannot move freely.[9] Therefore, strict implementation of the travel ban against all listed individuals remains one opportunity to maintain leverage over the Taliban leadership.

34. During its engagement with Member States since the beginning of 2015, the Monitoring Team has observed an increase in the use of International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)-United Nations Security Council Special Notices that are issued for listed individuals. The INTERPOL National Central Bureau also connected electronically all official land and air border crossings of Afghanistan to the various INTERPOL databases, enabling a direct check of travellers and passengers against the Special Notices.

35. However, one weakness remains. Any updates to the Security Council lists are communicated through a press release and an official note verbale to all Member States. These multiple communications mean that Member States authorities and private sector stakeholders are aware of any new information concerning listed individuals from the moment that it becomes available. The Special Notices directly address the police forces within Member States, and in many cases are directly uploaded into border control and border management systems. However, there seems to be no equivalent multi-layered alert and communications mechanism for the corresponding updates on the Special Notices within the closed INTERPOL system. Ensuring that police forces of Member States are aware of the latest status of the information on the Special Notices requires further communication between various authorities within each Member State. This process could be simplified if

the Committee would communicate on a regular basis which Special Notices have been updated within a given time frame.

36. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee annually inform all Member States which Special Notices have been updated in the preceding year, staring from July 2015.**

37. This update could also include Special Notices for which biometric information, such as photographs, has been made available. In order to avoid creating a non-mandated new deadline for the Committee's work, the Monitoring Team suggests that this be sent along with the official communication that the Chair dispatches as part of the annual review of the list as mandated in paragraph 33 of Security Council resolution 2160 (2014).

2. Assets freeze

(a) Regulatory framework

38. Since the end of 2014 the Government of Afghanistan has steadily improved the legal and regulatory framework supporting the implementation of the asset freeze against listed individuals in Afghanistan. In 2014 Afghanistan passed the Counter-Terrorism Financing and Anti-Money Laundering Law. The Government is currently working on the finalization of the corresponding implementation regulation. In order to ensure a frictionless implementation of both the laws and the corresponding regulations, the Government has established a high-level coordination committee, chaired by the Ministry of Finance, that brings together representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Security Council, the National Directorate for Security, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Afghanistan (FinTRACA) and INTERPOL to work on the respective regulatory framework. One current challenge is the implementation of asset freeze measures against immovable assets (property). Property deeds for land and buildings are not yet formalized on a national scale. Measures in this area require a significant amount of forensic research and are very time consuming. According to official interlocutors, relevant Afghan authorities have begun to address this issue.

39. The Government of Afghanistan has also started discussions on establishing a domestic sanctions list. In addition, at the beginning of 2015 the Government passed a new cash courier regulation. Since February 2015, it is no longer allowed for individuals to cross the borders of Afghanistan with more than $10,000 in physical cash. All transactions above this amount have to be done through the commercial banking sector. In addition, new customs regulations allow the export of gold from the country only for reshaping. This has the effect of making the transport of gold as a quasi-subsidiary currency out of the country no longer possible (at least licitly). Similar regulation is planned for precious stones.

40. The registration of *hawala* businesses is steadily progressing, even outside major businesses. FinTRACA and the Da Afghanistan Bank are currently involved in a national outreach and awareness-raising programme funded by the United States Department of the Treasury. Da Afghanistan Bank, in order to encourage *hawala* businesses to volunteer for registration, allows registered Money Service Providers to participate in the weekly sale of hard currency. As this hard currency is

sold at a preferential rate, the participation allows registered Money Service Providers to increase profits from their currency exchange operations.

41. According to official interlocutors of the Monitoring Team, FinTRACA has frozen successive accounts of Haji Khairullah Haji Sattar Money Exchange (TAe.010) over the past year. Abdul Satar Abdul Manan (TAi.162) and Khairullah Barakzai Khudai Nazar (TAi.163) had attempted to re-establish their business through transferring quasi control over the business to various associates that acted as frontmen for both listed individuals. These transfers, however, did not affect the beneficial ownership of the entity. Consequently, as soon as FinTRACA became aware of this obvious attempt to avert Security Council sanctions measures, it reimplemented the asset freeze on the newly established accounts and reclosed the offices of the entity in Herat City.

(b) Taliban exploitation of Afghanistan's mining potential

42. The Taliban movement continues to generate significant assets through the direct or indirect illegal exploitation of natural resources in Afghanistan. There is no strategic change from the situation described in the fifth report of the Monitoring Team from November 2014 (S/2014/888). However, during its provincial visits since the publication of the fifth report, the Monitoring Team was able to gather additional details on the various attempts of the insurgency to benefit from the exploitation of natural resources in Afghanistan.

43. According to Afghan officials, in Nangarhar province, the Taliban have been able to gain control of significant mining operations. Talcum mining seems to be a particular concern. In Herat province, the insurgency regularly launches attacks against marble quarry locations. The most recent attack occurred on 15 May 2015. According to Afghan security officials, the strategic object of these attacks is to intimidate the local business community in order to extort payments from the legal mining operations and to steal mining equipment. Taliban groups also regularly "tax" transport vehicles on the roads leading from the marble mines to Herat City.[21]

44. According to interlocutors of the Monitoring Team within the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, the Taliban have succeeded in gaining control of two of the three possible access roads to the lapis lazuli mine in the north of the province. Therefore, the Taliban would currently be in a position to extort payments from the transport of mined lapis lazuli. However, according to Afghan interlocutors, the National Security Council of Afghanistan decided to postpone the renewal of the mining licence in January 2015 because of a legal dispute between the former licence holder and the Government.[22] As a result, no legal mining of new lapis lazuli is possible in Afghanistan at present.[23] Meanwhile, according to Afghan officials, the Taliban have established an illegal gold mining operation in Raghistan district in the north of Badakhshan province.

[21] Herat City is the main export point for marble quarried in the province.

[22] See for example: Pahjwok Afghan News, "Azure worth 1b afs seized in Badakhshan", 14 February 2015.

[23] There are three mining locations for lapis lazuli in Afghanistan. All three mines are located in Badakhshan province, one in Jurm district, one In Kuran Wa Munjan district and one in Zebak district. However, none of the three mines currently holds a valid licence from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum.

45. Taliban exploitation of mines in areas under their control or influence and involvement in the smuggling of products abroad continue in the provinces of Ghazni, Wardak, Sari Pul, Kandahar, Paktya, Helmand, Khost, Logar and Zabul. There is no precise estimate of the Taliban's overall income from these illegal mining operations and extortion activities. However, various Afghan officials described the income from these activities as very significant, perhaps totalling nationally at least several dozen million United States dollars annually and second only to Taliban revenue generation from narcotics.

46. The Government of Afghanistan is keenly aware of the fact that the insurgency is illegally exploiting the natural resources of the country as one of its financial sources to fund the war against the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. Therefore, as a first counter measure the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has compiled a database of all licenced mining operations in the country, including their location in Afghanistan. The ministry is currently double-checking the data of this list and aims, after official approval has been obtained, to issue the list as an official document. Officials from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum agreed to provide the list to the Committee as soon as it is officially issued as a Government document. Such an official list would enable traders of natural resources inside Afghanistan, as well as regional and international traders, to double-check whether the material offered comes from a licenced mining operation or not.

47. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee include this list in the forthcoming communication with all Member States on illegal mining, in order to raise awareness and to enable private sector stakeholders to strengthen their due diligence processes (see S/2014/402, para. 55).**

(c) Taliban assets from narcotics

48. According to data provided to the Team by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Afghanistan set a record for growing opium poppies in 2014.[24] The total area under opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan was estimated to be 224,000 hectares in 2014, a 7 per cent increase from the previous year. In 2014, the average farm-gate price (weighted by production) of dry opium at harvest time was $133 per kilogram in 2014. Consequently, the total farm-gate value of opium production in Afghanistan in 2014 reached $850 million.

49. The threat picture of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, which locates the various insurgency groups and their areas of operations in the country, continues to demonstrate an overlap with the zones in which narcotics are grown and refined in Afghanistan. The most striking case in this regard is the Sangin district in Helmand province. The central location of the district in the transport network of the south of Afghanistan and the fact that the district houses a number of heroin laboratories explains, according to the assessment of official interlocutors of the Team, why the Taliban movement continues to make significant efforts to retain control of the district. Therefore, official interlocutors of the Team and the data the Team gathered during its various visits to Afghanistan since the beginning of 2015

[24] See for example, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics, "Afghan Opium Survey 2014, Cultivation and Production", Kabul, Afghanistan, November 2014; available from www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghan-opium-survey-2014.pdf.

seem to indicate that the majority of the farm-gate value of opium production in Afghanistan benefitted the insurgency either directly or indirectly.

3. Arms embargo

50. High-ranking Afghan officials in the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces continue to emphasize that the Taliban and other groups of the insurgency in Afghanistan continue to procure the main part of their weapons and ammunition outside Afghanistan in Member States neighbouring the country. This supply line seems to be unbroken and the Government of Afghanistan is in continuing discussions and negotiations with the Member States concerned in order to address this difficult issue.

51. Since the last report, the Monitoring Team continued to engage relevant Afghan security officials on the issue of the use of industrially produced spare parts of improvised explosive devices, such as detonators, detonating cords and remote-controlled triggers, and has regularly updated the Committee on this issue through its trip reports. Since the end of 2014 no strategic change has occurred. Improvised explosive devices continue to be used widely and indiscriminately by the Taliban in their fight with Government forces. As documented by regular reports of the United Nations Assistance Mission of Afghanistan (UNAMA), the steady increase of improvised explosive devices as a weapon of choice of the Taliban is one of the main factors for the continuing rise in civilian casualties of the conflict.[25]

52. As previewed in the fifth report (see S/2014/888, para. 61), the Team has had detailed discussions with private sector stakeholders in the Afghan mining industry and the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. The Ministry, in cooperation with Afghan security agencies, is responsible for the issuing and oversight of licences to import explosive materials for mining operations into the country. In cooperation with these interlocutors, the Monitoring Team explored whether further strengthening of the regulatory system could produce a significant impact on the ability of the Taliban to obtain these parts inside the country. Through these discussions it became clear that the continuing development of the regulatory framework in Afghanistan during the last years has already strengthened internal controls and introduced detailed monitoring and auditing mechanisms, very similar to the ideas that the Monitoring Team had already suggested in its third report (see S/2013/656, paras. 59-61). Therefore, further strengthening of the control and management of detonators, detonating cords and explosive materials inside Afghanistan is unlikely to have a noticeable impact on the availability of these industrially produced parts for the Taliban.

53. Apart from the strengthening of the internal control mechanisms, a second opportunity to undermine Taliban resupply from improvised explosive device manufacturers may lie in greater efforts concentrated on the sources of these parts outside Afghanistan. In its third report the Monitoring Team had already highlighted the important role of appropriate risk awareness of Member States neighbouring

[25] The most recent UNAMA report documents this trend and attributes 72 per cent of all civilian casualties to anti-Government elements. See: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Afghanistan Annual Report 2014, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2015; available from http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/2015/2014-Annual-Report-on-Protection-of-Civilians-Final.pdf.

Afghanistan, as well as Member States wishing to invest in the extractive sector in Afghanistan (see S/2013/656, para. 64). The Monitoring Team will continue to engage relevant Member States on this issue to increase attention of the relevant authorities to this issue. Regional initiatives, such as the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan in the "Heart of Asia", also play an important role here.[26]

X. Work of the Monitoring Team

1. Analysis, monitoring and implementation

54. Since it submitted its fifth report, the Monitoring Team has continued to focus on its core business, namely, analysing the threat posed by the Taliban and their affiliates to peace, stability and security in Afghanistan, providing advice on listings and focusing on strengthening the impact of the sanctions regime. The Team's advantage lies in its ability to work collaboratively with Governments around the world, in particular the Government of Afghanistan. The Team also reaches out to external specialists in order to make an integrated assessment of the threat posed by the Taliban and associates and to advance a targeted, effective and fair sanctions regime. The Team's own expertise on Afghanistan, together with that of specialists on finance, arms and border security measures, continues to sustain these efforts.

2. Cooperation with Member States, academic and civil society experts

55. In addition to its cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and other relevant Member States, the Monitoring Team established new cooperation with officials from the Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) in Manama. The Task Force is a multinational naval force that conducts counter-terrorism operations in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Task Force regularly seizes significant amounts of narcotics that seem to be of Afghan origin.[27] Through its cooperation with the Task Force, the Government of Afghanistan and UNODC, the Monitoring Team will ascertain whether the seized narcotics are part of the Taliban asset generation structure and would offer opportunities for an increase in the strengthening of the asset freeze against individuals listed on the 1988 sanctions list.

56. **The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee invite the command of Combined Maritime Task Force 150 to brief the Committee, with particular reference to their actions against Afghan narcotics, as this should inform the Committee's understanding of indirect financing sources for the Taliban and selected listed individuals and entities.**

[26] The process includes an expert working group on the issue of improvised explosive devices in Afghanistan. See Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process "Regional Technical Group Meeting (RTG). Counter Terrorism Confidence Building Measure (CT-CBM). Outcome Report", Ankara, Turkey, 11 March 2015; available from www.heartofasia-istanbulprocess.af/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Outcome-Document-of-CT-RTG-Ankara.pdf.

[27] See for example: Combined Maritime Forces, "CTF-150 ship seizes $22.4m heroin in Arabian Sea", 28 May 2014.

57. The Monitoring Team also continued to engage academic and civil society experts on the Taliban movement and the situation in Afghanistan. Since November 2014, the Team engaged with Afghan analysts and academics on its visits to the country. In addition, the Team participated in conferences on Afghanistan and the region at Ditchley Park and Chatham House in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States of America. The Team has also engaged academics in Germany, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan.

3. Cooperation with other United Nations bodies

58. The Monitoring Team continues to closely cooperate with UNAMA and is grateful for the support the Team receives on a regular basis from UNAMA under the leadership of Nicholas Haysom during and in between its visits to the country.

59. In addition, the Monitoring Team continues to engage with relevant UNODC experts on the drug economy in Afghanistan, and has begun to cooperate with experts on the Afghan mining industry of the United Nations Environment Programme to increase its understanding of this sector of the Afghan economy and deepen the Team's assessment of the illegal exploitation of natural resources by the Taliban.

4. Cooperation between the Security Council and the International Criminal Police Organization

60. The Monitoring Team has established intensive and frequent cooperation with the National Central Bureau of INTERPOL in Kabul. This new cooperation regularly results in the exchange of threat assessments and the provision of official information on listed individuals to the Team.

61. Thanks to the work of the INTERPOL New York Liaison Office and United Nations staff members mandated to support the work of the Monitoring Team, the Team has also received relevant information on listed individuals and entities from various INTERPOL National Central Bureaus located in Member States.

5. Contributing to the public debate

62. The Team would welcome feedback on the analysis and suggestions contained in the present report, which can be sent to 1988mt@un.org.

Annex

Structure of the Taliban

The Taliban responded to rumours that their leader Mullah Omar might be deceased by publishing alongside his biography an overview of their claimed internal structure, following up on a similar message dated September 2014. In marked contrast to the previous message, the 2015 message clarifies that central decision-making rests with Mullah Akhtar Mansour.

Taliban central structure

A. Office of Amir al-Mu'minin: it is claimed by the Taliban website that Mullah Omar continues to oversee his deputy Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the leadership council, the judiciary, nine executive commissions and three other administration organs

B. Leadership council: it is claimed by the Taliban website to have 20 members, including Muhammad Hassan Babar (TAi.002), Mullah Mohammadullah Mati, also known as Mullah Nanay (TAi.068), Muhammad Hassan Rahmani (TAi.096), Noor Mohammad Saqib (TAi.110), Mawlawi Kabir (TAi.003), Qayum Zaker (not listed, rejoined since January 2015), Mawlawi Sayyid Abdul Rahman (not listed), Abdul Qadeer Basir (TAi.128), Mullah Shirin (not listed), Mullah Muhammad Rahmatullah (not listed)

C. Courts and judges: reportedly presided over by Hajji Mawlawi Ubaydullah Akhundzada (not listed)

Taliban commissions and "organs" (independent directorates):

1. Military commission: appoints provincial shadow governors, deputy shadow governors for all 34 provinces, district shadow governors, and in each district group commanders and squad leaders. The military commission is claimed to have its own terms of reference and to organize training of Taliban forces. It is reportedly led by Mullah Ibrahim Sadar (not listed).
2. Political commission: includes Tayyib Agha (not listed), Hajji Din Mohammad (TAi.043), Shahabuddin Delawar and Abdul Salam Hanafi (TAi.027)
3. Cultural commission: Amir Khan Motaqi (TAi.026)
4. Financial and economic commission: Mullah Gul Agha Ishakzai (TAi.147)
5. Health commission: Mullah Abbas Akhund (TAi.066)
6. Education commission
7. Outreach and guidance commission
8. Prisoners' commission
9. Non-governmental organization commission
10. Organ for the prevention of civilian casualties

11. Organ for Martyrs' and disabled people

12. Organ for collecting and organizing special revenue

Senior Taliban leaders who are not listed under the sanctions regime

The newly emerged Taliban leadership in the provinces is not listed for the most part. Nine of the 33 individuals listed below were already featured in the annex to the previous report. Their names are marked with an asterisk (*). In order to reflect the networks of the Taliban, the Team also marked the original affiliation of the individual in brackets: (QS) = Quetta Shura network; (PS) = Peshawar Shura network; (HQN) = Haqqani Network.

Name	*Function*
Qari Fasihuddin (QS) (*)	Shadow governor, Badakhshan
Doctor Fazlullah (QS)	Military commander, Badakhshan
Mullah Amanuddin (QS)	Military commander, Badakhshan
Mullah Abdulhakim a.k.a. Abdulqayum (QS)	Shadow governor, Badghis
Mawlawi Mohammad (QS)	Shadow governor, Baghlan
Mullah Sayid Sulayman Agha (QS)	Shadow governor, Daikundi
Mawlavi Baz Mohamamd (QS) (*)	Shadow governor, Farah
Mawlavi Salahuddin (QS & HQN)	Shadow governor, Faryab
Mawlavi Sadruddin Sarhadi (HQN)	Shadow governor, Ghazni
Doctor Khalili (HQN)	Haqqani commander, Ghazni-Paktya
Mawlavi Abdulkhaliq (QS) (*)	Shadow governor, Ghor
Mullah Jaylani (QS)	Taliban shadow governor, Helmand
Mawlavi Abdulwali Shuaybkhel (QS)	Taliban shadow governor, Herat
Hafiz Mohibullah (QS)	Taliban shadow governor, Kabul
Mawlavi Gad Haji Lalla (PS) (*)	Taliban shadow governor, Kandahar
Ghazi Noorullah (PS)	Taliban shadow governor, Kapisa
Qari Baryal (PS) (*)	Taliban commander, Laghman, Kapisa, Panjsher, Parwan
Mawlavi Ahmad Jan (HQN)	Taliban shadow governor, Khost
Mawlavi Mohammad Omer Mukhlis (QS)	Taliban shadow governor, Kunar
Mawlavi Abdul Salam (*)	Taliban shadow governor, Kunduz
Shah Rahman (HQN)	Haqqani commander, Kunduz

Name	*Function*
Qari Zubair (Jundullah)	Head of Jundullah, Kunduz
Mawlavi Amin Jan Kochi (PS)	Taliban shadow governor, Laghman
Mawlavi Mir Ahmad Gul (PS)	Shadow governor, Nangarhar
Abdul Rahim Muslimdost (ISIL)	ISIL commander, Nangarhar
Mawlavi Abdul Qayum Rohani (QS) (*)	Shadow governor, Nimroz
Mawlavi Esmatullah (PS)	Shadow governor, Nuristan
Mullah Adam Khan Kochi (HQN)	Haqqani commander, Paktya Logar
Mawlawi Ismail (PS) (*)	Shadow governor, Parwan
Mawlawi Najibullah Attaullah (QS)	Shadow governor, Sari Pul
Qari Ahmadullah Mullahkhel (PS) (*)	Shadow governor, Wardak, former member Hezb-i Islami Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (QDi.088)
Mullah Nasrullah Matiullah (PS)	Shadow governor, Zabul
Mansoor Dadullah (FM)	Fidayi Mahaz commander, Zabul

Source: Government of Afghanistan.